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... a monthly bulletin from Canadian Hydrographic Service

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January Precipitation Over the Great Lakes

As a percentage of the long-term January average:

Great Lakes Basin	67%
Lake Erie (including Lake St. Clair)	116%
Lake Superior	50%
Lakes Michigan-Huron	56%
Lake Ontario	82%

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The Rt. Hon. Herb Gray Appointed to the IJC

Daily Water Levels on Lakes St. Clair, Erie and Ontario Respond to Precipitation

After experiencing unseasonably warm weather during the latter part of January, the lower Great Lakes region experienced a dramatic shift back to winter weather at the end of the month as a major storm system pasted through the region and along the upper St. Lawrence River.

Along with high winds, the storm brought precipitation in the form of rain, freezing rain and snow. While monthly mean water levels on all of the Great Lakes, except Lake Ontario, declined from December to January, daily water levels on Lakes St. Clair, Erie and Ontario increased at the end of January in response to the precipitation.

Daily water levels on Lakes Superior and Michigan-Huron fell below their respective chart datum levels during January. The levels of Lakes St. Clair and Ontario moved above average. While water levels on the other lakes remain below average, the levels on all lakes are higher than they were at the same time last year.

Compared to their long-term levels for the beginning of February, Lake Superior was 15 cm below average, Lakes Michigan-Huron were 38 cm below average and Lake Erie was 4 cm below average. Lakes St. Clair and Ontario, on the other hand, were 2 cm above their long-term average levels. At the beginning of February, water levels on Lakes Superior, Michigan-Huron, St. Clair and Erie were around 20 cm higher than they were one year ago. Lake Ontario began February about 10 cm higher than it was at the same time last year.

Montréal Harbour's monthly mean water level was 5.81 m in January, 105 cm below its period-of-record average level for the month.

Monthly mean water levels are expected to decline on Lakes Superior and Michigan-Huron from January to February. Water levels are expected to increase on Lakes St. Clair, Erie and Ontario. Please refer to the current Monthly Water Levels Bulletin for the most recent six-month water level forecast on each lake.

Note: These figures are preliminary.

January Outflows From the Great Lakes

As a percentage of the long-term January average

Lake Superior	104%
Lake Erie	100%
Lake Huron	104%
Lake Ontario	97%

Note: These figures are preliminary.

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Summary information for "LEVEL*news*"

The Rt. Hon. Herb Gray Appointed to the Canadian Section of the IJC

On Wednesday, January 16th the Rt. Hon. Herb Gray took his oath as a Commissioner and Chairman of the Canadian Section of the International Joint Commission (IJC) in a short ceremony and official meeting of Commissioners that linked by telephone U.S. Chairman Tom Baldini, Commissioners Robert Gourd and Jack Blaney as well as Canadian Secretary Murray Clamen, U.S. Secretary Gerry Galloway and Regional Office Director Gail Krantzberg.

The IJC is an international organization established by the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 to prevent and resolve disputes over the use of waters shared by the United States and Canada.

Year 2001 in Review

Water levels on all of the Great Lakes, except Lake Ontario, were several centimetres below average during 2001 as a result of low water supplies to the lakes that began in 1997 on the upper lakes. Although water supplies to Lake Ontario were below average during the year, below-average outflows had an offsetting effect and helped keep the lake's level closer to average.

Mild, wet weather during the fall of 2001 slowed, and in some cases temporarily reversed, the usual seasonal decline in water levels on each of the Great Lakes. As a result, water level conditions on each lake improved relative to their long-term seasonal averages and all lakes ended 2001 with levels higher than those recorded at the beginning of the year.

Due to low flows from the Ottawa River and other tributaries to the Montréal region of the St. Lawrence River, levels at the Port of Montréal set new record lows for several months in 2001.

The low water levels resulted in below-average hydropower generation in the St. Marys, Niagara and St. Lawrence rivers. They also required some ships to reduce their cargo or suspend operations when strong winds depressed already low water levels. Other problems included unusable docks and ramps, and reduced water depths for recreational boaters. Shallow shore-wells were impacted and there were additional operating costs related to water withdrawal for some domestic and industrial users.

The regulation plan for Lake Superior performed as designed to help balance water level conditions upstream on Lake Superior and downstream on Lakes Michigan-Huron.

To provide relief to users in the Montréal region affected by low water levels, the International St. Lawrence River Board of Control released some of the water it had previously conserved on Lake Ontario. Assistance was also given to hydropower interests by releasing some of the stored water during the late-July, early-August heat wave when the demand for electricity was very high.

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